142 Races]; Lieutenant Girard, Notes anthropométriques sur quelques Soudanais occidentaux [Anthropometric Notes on Some West Sudanese], 1909; Les races et les peuples de la terre [Races and Peoples of the Earth]; Chantre, Contribution à l'étude des races humaines du Soudan occidental [Contribution to the Study of the Human Races of the Western Sudan], 1918; Dr. Verneau, L'homme, races et coutumes [Man, Races and Customs], 1931.

From this study, a little hasty since the observations were made on very few subjects, we will retain the following features:

141 Without attaining the ultradolichocephaly of the Malinké, the Bambara is [5] characterized by his dolichocephaly (horizontal cephalic index 75.05; for Deniker 76.4) and his fairly considerable height (1.71 meters for the "aristocrats," a result of interbreeding with the Peul population, and 1.65 meters for the ordinary Bambara). Dr. Pales and Tassin de Saint-Péreuse give us figures which are considerably different and which are particularly interesting because their observations were made on 893 individuals. They give the horizontal cephalic index as 74.3, and the average height as 171.8.

Tauxier concluded in these terms: "It is a good Negro race, crossbred with several superior elements!"

142 Let us add to his description that the Bambara has a solid build, with no dissymmetry, a platyrrhinian nose, a pronouncedly [147] ogival skull, a skin whose scars have a keloidian tendency, and an excellent natural defense against infection, although certain regions [64] are particularly infested with goiter. They practice cranial deforma- [304] tion very little, differing in that from the Malinké and the Kassonké. Let us note, finally, that the Bambara have black wooly hair, but that some women have hair with red lights which is considered by 143 the natives as a magnificent trait. We shall not discuss the albinos with white skin and colorless hair, of whom the percentage is small.

R. Koerber, in Étude de la répartition des groupes sanguins chez quelques races d'A.O.F. [Study of the Distribution of Blood Groups in Several Races of French West Africa], out of a total of 1,066 Bambara found 3.9 percent of group AB; 25.7 percent of group A; 27.7 percent of group B, and 42.7 percent of group B, and 42.7 percent of group O. Group O then is dominant, but less frequent than for the Ouolof [Wolof], Malinké, Foula, and Sérère [Serer] races.

847 And is abortion such a great crime in the eyes of the Bambara? Less serious, surely, than one might imagine. It is very common, and when a woman passes, one may overhear from the lips of the Negroes, even those of children: "a y'i kono tigné, she has destroyed the fruit of her womb." There is nothing to teach Bambara children; [864] at eight and ten years they know everything! When one listens to their conversations and lends an ear to their songs, they always revolve around the vilest subjects.

3. The Birth of a Child

842 Before birth. -- Not only is it impossible for the Bambara to accept the idea that a man could live without a wife or a woman without a husband, they likewise cannot conceive of a home without children. They desire the pleasures of fatherhood, and a couple who are healthy or, to put it better, capable of consummating the conjugal act, /166/ quickly appeal to a diviner's knowledge, however short a time they have waited to have children. They believe that sterility is the result of sorcery or an evil spell.

833 When the husband is impotent or afflicted with an illness 847 which prevents all marital relations, his wife readily becomes unfaithful and commits adultery in order to avoid the shame of sterility. Moreover, in order not to have to face a winking eye that speaks volumes or a disdainful smile which reveals everything, the husband is indulgent and even approves her crime, at least for the first times. Let us admit quickly that he can do nothing about it, for if she cannot be unfaithful, the wife will abandon herself to loud cries, demand a divorce, and reject the man, who would himself leave her if she were in a similar situation. Without approving of such indulgence, one can understand it on the part of an unfortunate who needs to keep his cook and safeguard his honor before a people that scorns an impotent man and sees nothing amiss in adultery since it is a crime that can be redeemed.

[164] 843 If a woman who conceives is in a syphilitic condition, which is often the case, the fruit of her womb seldom comes to full term